

ing Charlotte Stant on the other. Like Lambert Strether and Merton Densher, the Prince gains "more from women than he had ever lost by them."⁵⁴ The Prince's refinement is made possible, firstly, by his percipient consciousness and responsive sensibility, and, secondly by the refinement which his wife herself achieves through a knowledge and awareness of evil. The Prince's refinement consists in his knowing and affirming the dangers of over-prizing the "appearance" of a beauty which is totally devoid of good. The "touchstones" of aestheticism, taste, civility and good manners are by themselves nothing, and should not have an existence in life, independent of the good and the moral. The fusion of the aesthetic and the moral principles of human life is, thus, the measure of human refinement.

The Prince's famous Italian ancestor had discovered America, and thereby released its infinite material resources to Europe. Like his ancestor, Amerigo goes to seek the material resources of the Ververs, and in the process discovers the unsuspected moral wealth of America. Henry-James's idea of a refined Western civilization is one, in which European art, manners and culture are wedded to American morality. In this light, the significance of Adam Verver's life mission becomes clear. Towards the end of the novel, Adam Verver, returns to the "American City" on the sacred mission of endowing it with the art treasures which he had collected in Europe. It is the fulfilment of this ambition which, to a very great extent, lessens his pain and sorrow at having had to part from his beloved daughter, Maggie.

Henry James does not, however, say that American morality is perfect and flawless. The "spontaneous moral sense" of America is very often coupled with innocence, with fear of experience, of evil. Born as human beings are to sin, the 'golden bowl' of their lives has a crack, despite its sheer loveliness and its gilded exterior. Evil rears its fatal, ugly head constantly, and one cannot but take notice of it. Not to know evil, argues human life unknown. It is when evil is

encountered, and overcome that the individual self is morally refined.

The American, like all other fellow-human beings, faces this basic

human problem of converting a naturalistic confrontation of evil into

a personal resource of refined selfhood. Europe, with her ancient

culture, civilization and art, offers the maximum opportunities for the

American Adam and the American Eve to refine themselves. The

European, who has only outer refinement, turns to America for those

of the heart and spirit, which make his inner refinement possible.